

Cathy,

Please include this submission within the Planning Committee Agenda package.

I have seen the extract below (in blue) on Trail Closures, copied from version 5 of the **Planning & Design Standards for Trails in ESA's** and am concerned about it.

The Trails in ESAs Standard is on the agenda for adoption of the standard at the June 18 meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee.

### **Trail Closures**

**As part of the effort to minimize the number of trails, and to optimize the location of trails, it may be necessary to close portions of the existing trail network.**

**The location of the new trail will be determined by following the planning principles and processes discussed throughout this document. Closing of the existing trail is an essential part of the overall process of trail planning and management. If the former trail is not properly decommissioned and its location sufficiently disguised, it will continue to attract users.**

My major concern is the **lack of protection for the existing 50 Km network of "main" trails, especially the heritage trails within the ESA's.** For example, **Thames Valley Trail will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official opening of the in-city trail on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1973.** The trail was developed by the citizens of London to provide an interconnection between the existing Parks. The trail runs through the Kains Woods, Warbler Woods and Kilally Meadows ESAs. This trail forms part of an **uninterrupted network that extends from Lake Erie to Georgian Bay.** This network, in turn, is connected to the Provincial and National trail grids. To put the size of the ESA trail concern into perspective, London's trails account for **less than 2% of our total ESA area.**

Due to climate change and other factors, most of the ESAs are expected to **eventually receive the Nature Reserve designation.** This designation means no trails whatsoever, unless an exemption is given. **The Nature Reserve designation has the potential to destroy the existing trail network if no grandfathering protection is provided in the standards.**

We walk in the ESAs on a regular basis and value the physical fitness, social benefits and natural beauty they provide. We also value the environment and have been educated to minimize our impact when using the trails. We also believe that shutdown of our existing trails will harm the ESA's over the long term. Londoner's will withdraw their financial support if they are unable to enjoy the ESA benefits.

**We request council's support and action to modify these standards to provide greater protection for our existing trail network.**

Sincerely,

Maureen McGauley  
member, Thames Valley Trail Association.